

Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ)

# **EPA Environmental Justice Fact Sheet**

## ***Interagency Working Group***



### **BACKGROUND**

Executive Order 12898, entitled "Federal Actions to Address Environmental

Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations," issued February 11, 1994, focuses federal attention on the environmental and human health conditions of minority populations, low-income populations, and tribal populations with the goal of achieving environmental protection for all communities.

### **INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP**

One provision of Executive Order 12898 established an Interagency Working Group (IWG) on Environmental Justice chaired by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and comprised of eleven departments/agencies and several White House offices ([www.epa.gov/compliance/environmentaljustice/interagency/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/compliance/environmentaljustice/interagency/index.html)). These include the EPA, the Departments of Justice, Defense, Energy, Labor, Interior, Transportation, Agriculture, Housing and Urban Development, Commerce, and Health and Human Services, the President's Council on Environmental Quality, the Office of Management and Budget, the Office of Science and Technology Policy, the Domestic Policy Council, and the Council of Economic Advisors. In addition, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Federal Emergency Management Administration, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation have participated in the IWG.

### **IWG - TASK FORCES**

The IWG currently has three task forces to address issues requiring coordination to develop effective federal strategies. The task forces are: 1) Health Disparities, 2) Native American, and 3) Demonstration/Revitalization Projects. The creation and dissolution of task forces occurs on an as needed basis. For instance, in the mid- 1990's the IWG consisted of 8 task forces, which dissolved after the tasks were completed. Each task force is coordinated by two agencies with representation from each of the participating agencies.

### **INTERAGENCY PROJECTS**

The Executive Order also directs the IWG to develop interagency model demonstration projects, thereby sharing resources and technical expertise to address possible disproportionately high and adverse effects on human health or the environment. In 2000, the IWG selected 15 demonstration projects to promote and determine ways for agencies to collaborate and coordinate effectively to address environmental justice issues. Two IWG Status Reports which document the development of an environmental justice collaborative model are: *Environmental Justice Collaborative Model: A Framework to Ensure Local Problem-Solving* (EPA 300-R-02-001, February 2002, [www.epa.gov/compliance/environmentaljustice](http://www.epa.gov/compliance/environmentaljustice)) and *Towards an Environmental Justice Collaborative Model: An Evaluation of the Use of Partnerships to Address Environmental Justice Issues in Communities* (EPA/100-R-03-001 and EPA/100-R-03-002, January 2003, [www.epa.gov/evaluate](http://www.epa.gov/evaluate)).

In 2003, the IWG selected 15 more projects to serve as revitalization projects to showcase collaborative interagency and multi-stakeholder partnerships in the area of environmental justice and community revitalization. These partnerships involve two or more federal agencies working in cooperation with state and local governments, tribal governments, community-based organizations, academia, business and industry, and/or non-governmental organizations. The intent of the projects is to develop collaborative models to ensure problem-solving and sustainable solutions to a range of environmental, public, health, social and economic issues associated with environmental justice.

*For Additional Information, please contact:*

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## **PUBLIC MEETINGS**

The Executive Order provided for the IWG to hold public meetings to receive comments, questions, and recommendations regarding environmental justice issues.

In addition, a number of agencies, such as DOT, have held public meetings on environmental justice and have included participation of other agencies. Several EPA lead programs (e.g., Brownfields, Relocation Policy, National Environmental Justice Advisory Council, Regional Environmental Justice Listening Sessions, etc.) have held numerous public meetings, each having had significant participation from other Federal agencies.

## **TASK FORCE STATUS AND PRODUCTS**

<b>Task Force</b>	<b>Products</b>	<b>Status</b>
Health Disparities	Planning a federal meeting in May 2003 for federal agencies to coordinate activities	Ongoing
Revitalization/Interagency Projects	2003 - second round of projects selected 2000 - first round of projects selected	Ongoing
Native American	Federal Tribal Sacred Lands Protection Meeting - August 2002  Response to Roundtable Recommendations Roundtable Report - January 2001	Ongoing